

This administration has already made ominous utterances about the need for regime change in both Syria and Iran, and I would just ask this Congress before it relinquishes any more power, please examine the facts before we plunge ourselves into another military disaster in the Middle East.

HONORING HENRY HYDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. HARRIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and celebrate the extraordinary service to the Nation of Representative HENRY HYDE of Illinois. Many of us consider our election to Congress as a blessing and an opportunity to improve the lives of our constituents and our fellow Americans, and no one has merited that honor more than this esteemed and distinguished gentleman of irrefutable conviction and compassion.

In his more than 30 years as a Member of the House of Representatives and as chairman of the Committee on International Relations, Congressman HYDE has given the most vulnerable citizens a voice and focused our minds on the modern day horrors of child slavery, famine and genocide.

It was in his freshman term that colleagues would first become aware of his passionate devotion to the defense of innocent life, all human life, and at that time, tax dollars of all Americans were devoted to funding nearly 300,000 abortions annually.

Through the appropriations process, Mr. HYDE introduced an amendment to prohibit this practice and the adoption of the Hyde amendment forever changed the course of our national discussion about life and its protections.

I have considered my service on the House International Relations Committee under Chairman HYDE's stewardship as one of the most rewarding and enlightening experiences of my time in Congress. Not content to simply fund projects or engage in academic debates about geopolitics and Real Politic, our committee has played a critical role in shepherding the foreign affairs of the Nation.

The chairman's leadership has been indispensable as our Nation entered a new age of warfare and a time of bolder, more vibrant diplomacy.

A veteran of the committee, Chairman HYDE has been heard in the halls of Congress and countless administrations in the crucial interest about international arms control, the expansion of NATO, the investigation of the Iran-Contra affair and the long-overdue need for reform of the United Nations.

Earlier this year, Chairman HYDE eloquently addressed the challenges facing our Nation and the world, "We are well advanced into an unformed era in which new and unfamiliar enemies are gathering forces, where a phalanx of aspiring competitors must inevi-

tably constrain and focus our options. In a world where the ratios of strength narrow, the consequences of miscalculation will become progressively more debilitating."

□ 2015

The chairman's cogent argument in favor of a robust foreign policy has fueled the committee during the 109th Congress. The committee has led the way in U.N. reform, holding to account the privileged few of the United Nations who turned a blind eye as Saddam Hussein violated international law and basic human rights.

He has called attention to the tragic human drama that began long ago and today is simply known as Darfur. And most importantly, Chairman HYDE has worked to ensure the voice of this body is heard on matters of nuclear proliferation, the untenable policies of terrorist regimes, and forged ahead where Americans will stand as the world struggles through this unformed era.

Throughout his career, HENRY HYDE has never failed to heed his own counsel nor to lose his way. And the principles of basic rights and wrongs have guided his path forward.

His most important contribution, however, has been as a husband, father and grandfather. I am certain it is this job that he has enjoyed most.

In closing, I wish to thank Congressman HENRY HYDE for his extraordinary leadership, his friendship and his scholarship. We are truly a better people as a consequence of his service and for knowing him personally.

THE ALLEN SMALL BUSINESS PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to discuss the circumstances of the small business community in Maine and across the country. Regardless of size or industry, small businesses throughout the country share a common set of challenges: skyrocketing health care and fuel costs, an unstable and outdated Federal tax structure, an insufficient labor supply and lack of qualified workers, a lack of access to Federal contracts and inadequate funding for entrepreneurial assistance programs for start-up businesses and businesses that want to grow.

And it is my experience here that many of the organizations in Washington that hold themselves out as small business organizations are really advocating, in reality, a big business agenda.

Back in my home State of Maine, small business is big business. Maine is home to over 140,000 small businesses, and we have nearly 100,000 Mainers who are self-employed. Our prosperity de-

pends on the growth and the success of small business.

I have two bills, H.R. 5288, the Small Business Health Plans Act, and H.R. 5058, the Small Business Investment and Promotion Act, that would both aid small businesses by addressing many of the challenges that they face today.

Small businesses across America are struggling to maintain health care coverage for their workers. Really, most of the people I talk to every year find their premiums going up and find it very difficult to predict how much their health insurance will cost for the next year, assuming they have coverage.

My plan, under the bill H.R. 5288, makes quality health insurance more affordable and makes it easier for small businesses to obtain coverage for their employees. I believe that employees are entitled to the same coverage that Members of Congress and other Federal employees have. That is what my Small Business Health Plans bill provides.

The legislation would establish a small employer health benefits program for employers with 50 or fewer employees by creating new purchasing tools that would guarantee quality coverage at affordable rates to small businesses and their employees without preempting State requirements, much the way the coverage for Federal employees works.

One aspect of the bill would be to attract insurance companies by subsidizing the cost of catastrophic health care cases, and that would bring private insurers into this market and make the plan attractive.

Second, we would provide some premium assistance for smaller businesses and lower-wage workers.

Now, the second bill, H.R. 5058, has six different sections that cover the other difficulties that I mentioned at the beginning. First, the high cost of fuel for transportation and heat in winter is breaking the backs of small business owners, and no relief is in sight. H.R. 5058 creates a 2-year tax credit to cover the increased cost of fuel for businesses that are especially dependent on transportation fuel or the fuel to heat businesses and buildings.

Second, the Research and Development Tax Credit has never been made permanent, and that creates a great deal of uncertainty among businesses, large and small. This tax credit, if made permanent, would help companies stay afloat until they become profitable and would benefit all manufacturers for products that they develop by expending money on R&D. And my bill would make the credit permanent, and allow biotech and high-tech companies to make innovation a part of their long-term business plan.

Third, the Federal Government must do a better job of providing opportunity for small business to compete and win Federal contracts. My bill expands opportunities for small business